

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS

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TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJ: MAJOR STRIKES CONTINUE

1. DESPITE MAJOR AGREEMENTS RECENTLY REACHED BY LABOR WITH BOTH
GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY, LARGE SCALE STRIKE ACTIONS CONTINUE

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UNABATED. THUS, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS CONDUCTED A NATIONAL STRIKE

TODAY ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICATION TO THEIR SECTOR OF WAGE ESCALATION INCREASES RECENTLY WON IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WILL STRIKE NATIONWIDE FOR THE SAME OBJECTIVE ON FEB.26. THIS WILL INCLUDE THE PARA-STATE EMPLOYEES AS WELL AS TEACHERS, RAILWAY WORKERS, HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES AND THOSE IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS. THE PARA-STATE EMPLOYEES, IN ADDITION, ARE STRIKING FOR THREE DAYS FEB.19-21 "IN ORDER TO PERSUADE PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND REMUNERATIVE RESTRUCTURING" OF THE PARA-STATE SECTOR, INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF REDUNDANT AGENCIES. THE NATION'S MAGISTRATES, FOLLOWING THEIR STRIKE OF FEB.5-6, ARE CONTINUING THEIR AGITATION AND HAVE PROCLAIMED THEY WILL COMMENCE TO WORK-TO-RULE (SCIOPERO BIANCO) ON MARCH 1. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE NUMEROUS MORE RESTRICTED WORK STOPPAGES EITHER UNDERWAY OR DECIDED UPON.

2. IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THE DEMAND IS TO RAISE WAGE ESCALATION FROM 400 LIRE PER MONTH PER POINT OF PRICE INDEX INCREASE TO 948 LIRE, AS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS. THE GOVERNMENT IS STANDING FIRM AT AN OFFER OF 710 LIRE (635 LIRE EQUAL ONE DOLLAR). IN ADDITION, THE UNIONS DEMAND THE INCREASE OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES AS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THIS LATTER ITEM ALONE, IT IS ESTIMATED, WOULD COST THE STATE AN ADDITIONAL EIGHT BILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY.

3. COMMENT: THE SERIES OF NATIONAL STRIKES IN RECENT MONTHS, WHILE OFTEN APPEARING FUTILE AND EVEN GRATUITOUS, MAY WELL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE RESULTED IN MAJOR AGREEMENTS ON WAGE ESCALATION, PENSION REFORM AND GUARANTEED ANNUAL WAGES. RATHER THAN CREATING LABOR PEACE, HOWEVER, THE EFFECT SEEMS TO BE TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER STRIKES FOR ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES. THUS, AS WITH THE SUCCESSFUL SERIES OF KIDNAPPINGS AND THEFTS OF INVALUABLE WORKS OF ART, STRIKE ACTIONS FEED ON THEMSELVES. THEY PROLIFERATE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR EVIDENT SUCCESS AND CONTINUE TO BE ADVOCATED AND IMPLEMENTED FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF OBJECTIVES.VOLPE

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